resurrected; the House of Lords, the College of Arms, Sir William Haley, all going strong, or at any rate going. What I had assumed to be the end of the performance was only, after all, an *entr'acte]* the curtain had fallen, certainly, but only to rise again, disclosing the scenery, actors and costumes just as they had been before. Actors a shade tireder, perhaps, a shade more dependent on their prompter, lines mumbled a bit and mechanically delivered, costumes crumpled and shabby in the glare of the footlights, the pace of the whole production noticeably slowed down, yet indubitably the same old play and the same old performers.

Up to a point, then, on Armistice Day I stood confuted. The public rejoicings, recalling childhood memories of an earlier version in 1918, seemed to contradict the sombre shape of things to come envisaged in *The Thirties.* There *had* been a glorious victory; this time there really was to be a new and better world, on a basis of the Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter and other enlightened instruments, under-written by our three men of destiny, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin- Where the League of Nations had failed the United Nations would succeed; with the Beveridge Plan to ensure that wartime sacrifices had not been in vain, the new dawn would surely usher in a bright day*

In the event, this mood of hope proved even more transient than on the previous occasion,. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms were no more durable than Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points had been; the United Nations outdid the League in confusion and fatuity, and the cheques drawn on the Beveridge

Plan were honoured in inflated currency. Before the 1939-45 war had long been over, the line-up for another began, with the additional horror of being against the backdrop of a mushroom cloud*

The development of nuclear weapons opened up, for the first time in human history, the prospect of blowing the human race and the earth itself to smithereens. It was in a war-scarred and war-weary world, with this weird and macabre doom seeming!^ so near at hand, that a Welfare State was constructed to keep us all healthy, wealthy and wise for evermore. By a strange irony